

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3, 20, and 25 are currently amended. Claims 28-32 have been added. Applicant respectfully submits that the amendments and added claims contained herein are fully supported by the Specification as originally filed and do not contain new matter.

Information Disclosure Statement

The Norwesco, Inc. document that was filed as part of the communication filed on January 26, 2005, and listed on the 1449 Form filed with the present application on September 24, 2003, was not considered because the Examiner was unable to see the details of the document. In the communication filed on September 21, 2005, in response to the Office Action mailed June 23, 2005, Applicant indicated that an original of the Norwesco, Inc. document would be sent directly to the Examiner. This was agreed to during the telephonic Examiner's interview on July 27, 2005. As such, the Norwesco, Inc. document was sent directly to the Examiner on September 21, 2005, separate from the communication filed on September 21, 2005. There is no indication in the present Final Office Action, mailed December 6, 2005, as to whether the Norwesco, Inc. document has been considered. Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner indicate whether the Norwesco, Inc. document has been considered, and if the Norwesco, Inc. document has been considered, Applicant respectfully requests a copy of the initialed 1449 form.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hawkins (U.S. Patent No. 5,971,444) in view of Rowe (U.S. Patent No. 5,295,760). Claims 2 and 14-27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hawkins (U.S. Patent No. 5,971,444) in view of Rowe (U.S. Patent No. 5,295,760) and in further view of Jones (U.S. Patent No. 2,554,622). Applicant respectfully traverses.

Claim 1, as currently amended, recites a stud protruding from a face of the flange toward the first end and passing completely through the gasket, and a nut threadably attachable to the external threads of the coupling, the nut having an annular groove into which the stud extends when the nut is threadably attached to the external threads. This is different from Hawkins in

that the Examiner has taken a flange 20 (Figures 1 and 2) as corresponding to the flange of claim 1 and a female member 14 (Figures 1 and 2) as corresponding to the nut of claim 1. However, there is no indication of female member 14 having a groove, nor is there an indication or suggestion in Hawkins of a stud protruding from a face of flange 20. Therefore, Hawkins does not include or suggest each and every recitation of claim 1, so claim 1 is patentably distinct from Hawkins. Moreover, Hawkins in combination with Rowe fails to overcome the deficiencies of Hawkins with respect to claim 1. Therefore, claim 1 is allowable over Hawkins in view of Rowe.

Claims 2 and 8 have been canceled, mooting the rejections thereof.

Claims 3-7 depend from claim 1 and are thus allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 1. Therefore, claims 3-7 should be allowed.

Claims 14-19 have been canceled, mooting the rejection thereof.

Claim 20, as currently amended, recites aligning an alignment rib of the coupling with an alignment rib of a pipe fitting. This is different from Hawkins in that Hawkins does not include or suggest aligning an alignment rib of a coupling with an alignment rib of a pipe fitting. Therefore, Hawkins does not include or suggest each and every recitation of claim 20, so claim 14 is patentably distinct from Hawkins. Hawkins in combination with Rowe fails to overcome the deficiencies of Hawkins with respect to claim 20. Rowe shows centering guides 30 in Figures 1, 2, and 4 as a part of an insert 12. Centering guides 30 help center insert 12 in a hole in a wall, and additionally help assure an air passageway to gasket 14 from the front end of insert 12 by maintaining the wall 58 away from annular wall 13 of insert 12 as may be ascertained from Figure 2 (column 4, lines 10-15), but there is no indication or suggestion that any of centering guides 30 align with an alignment rib of a pipe fitting. Therefore, claim 20 is patentably distinct from Hawkins in view of Rowe. Hawkins in combination with Rowe and Jones fails to overcome the deficiencies of Hawkins in combination with Rowe with respect to claim 20. Therefore, claim 20 is allowable over Hawkins in view of Rowe and in further view of Jones.

Claims 21-23 and 25-27 depend from claim 20 and are thus allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 20. Therefore, claims 21-23 and 25-27 should be allowed.

Claim 24 has been canceled, mooting the rejection thereof.

Added Claims

Claims 28-32 have been added. Claim 28 depends from claim 1 and is thus allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 1. Claims 29-32 depend from claim 20 and are thus allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 20. Therefore, claims 28-32 should be allowed. Applicant respectfully requests admittance and allowance of claims 28-32.

Allowable Subject Matter


Applicant acknowledges that claims 10-13 were allowed.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above remarks, Applicant believes that the claims are in condition for allowance and respectfully requests a Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. If the Examiner has any questions regarding this application, please contact the undersigned at (612) 312-2208.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 01-31-00


Tod A. Myrum
Reg. No. 42,922

Attorneys for Applicant
Leffert Jay & Polglaze
P.O. Box 581009
Minneapolis, MN 55458-1009
T 612 312-2200
F 612 312-2250